

# Report of Federal Way, Washington Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

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# REPORT OF FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS

*In a time of crisis people want to know that you care,  
more than they care what you know – Will Rogers*

## I. INTRODUCTION

During its February 2018 retreat, the Federal Way City Council identified increasing homelessness in our community as a significant priority for the City. In response to the Council's acknowledgement and the efforts of the Mayor's Homeless Mothers and Children Initiative (HMCI) in 2017, Mayor Ferrell convened the broader Homelessness Task Force in April 2018. The group was charged with working to better understand homelessness in Federal Way and to develop a Strategic Plan of Action.

## II. FINDINGS

### A. Causes and Impacts for People Experiencing Homelessness

Our community and its leaders must start by abandoning any preconceived notions about homelessness and its causes. The reality is that the causes of homelessness are as varied as the individuals experiencing homelessness. *See Appendix A.*

This means that any attempt to develop cookie cutter solutions or to develop narrow or limited programs that do not fit as part of a comprehensive solution will not truly address the root causes of a pervasive problem affecting countless individuals and families.

Some efforts intended as solutions may actually exacerbate homelessness if they are implemented without a keen understanding of the individual, community, societal, and institutional dynamics that operate at the root cause level. Truly effective and compassionate solutions must focus on eliminating, or at least mitigating, the root causes of homelessness for each individual served so that they can move forward on a path to the ultimate goal of sustainable housing and a stable lifestyle.

Experiencing homelessness means living in crisis. Imagine having no place to go, no warm, safe, and dry place to sleep. No guarantee of the next meal, or even water to drink. Simple daily living essentials that most of us take for granted are rare luxuries for the homeless.

People experience homelessness differently. Families live in their cars if they cannot find shelter. Family life is disrupted as children struggle to do well in school and to fit in socially. Homelessness creates despair, hopelessness, and depression, which feels insurmountable—similar to being at the bottom of a deep well without a ladder. No connections, no social network, no stability, no getting out.

Stories from people experiencing homelessness tell a tale of constant fear and desperation

because of the inability to meet basic human needs. It is a tale of indignity fueled by the contempt with which the homeless are treated. Contrary to much of public perception, people experiencing homelessness are often *victims* of crime and abuse themselves since they are exposed to the elements and have no ability to protect themselves or their possessions.

## **B. Community Impacts of Homelessness**

### **i. Introduction**

In addition to the impacts on the people experiencing homelessness, the community impacts are broad and wide-ranging. In many ways, the impacts are creating a “them and us” atmosphere based upon misperceptions that all people experiencing homelessness are creating problems for the community; this is simply not true.

There is a general perception that providing more services to the homeless population has prompted criminals to come to our community to take advantage of those services. This perception makes it more difficult to build trust and cooperation by all concerned. However, the majority of people experiencing homelessness lives beneath the radar as law-abiding citizens. They are struggling for normalcy in a world that is full of barriers and the lack of community resources that can help break down those barriers.

### **ii. Public Safety and Crime**

With that said, some people experiencing homelessness are impacting the community adversely with substance abuse, theft, trespass, threatening behavior, other criminal conduct, panhandling, and unlawful encampments that create health dangers for the community and for the occupants themselves with violent crime, litter, lack of sanitation and adequate healthcare, used drug paraphernalia (including used needles), food waste, and human waste. Fires have also been a dangerous result of the encampments and have threatened homes as well as property. The net effect is increased concern by members of the community for their safety, health, property, and even environmental concerns with encampments that pollute our watersheds, especially at or near the Hylebos.

Furthermore, there is increasing police and code compliance involvement in responding to the law violations and other problems associated with the destructive behavior by some in the homeless community. The overall crime rate in Federal Way has dramatically declined in both 2017 (by ten percent) and 2018 (by approximately another ten percent as of the writing of this report), but police are nevertheless experiencing an alarming increase in crime committed by a certain percentage of the homeless population, primarily those living in encampments. From 2016 to 2017, empirical data from Federal Way show a 105% increase in criminal calls for service involving a person or people experiencing homelessness. A large number of these calls involve criminal trespass, which some regard as endemic to the homelessness crisis and the lack of available services.

### **iii. Specific Effects on Residents and Businesses**

The term “experiencing homelessness” can be applicable to members of the larger community if one applies the term to those in the community who are forced to expend their own money cleaning up property, repairing property, replacing stolen property, and paying security costs and other direct and indirect expenses associated with issues caused by a small percentage of those actually experiencing homelessness in the community.

Businesses and residents want a community that is safe, clean, and affordable. Businesses look for a community where business costs are manageable. The impact of the homeless issue on businesses is a valid concern because of the direct and indirect costs of reacting to the problems experienced.

#### **iv. Conclusion**

However, perhaps the most troublesome impacts on the community are the sense of frustration and helplessness by many and the “them and us” atmosphere created when people feel victimized by what seems to be endless and uncontrollable adverse impacts, including the effects of criminal conduct. The reaction by many is to oppose or cast a negative light on any attempts to provide services to people perceived as the perpetrators. The resultant environment of mistrust creates a no-win cycle. Specifically, the cycle of homelessness continues because some of its root causes, such as addiction and untreated mental illness, are not addressed in therapeutic and constructive ways when needed programs are cut, limited, or even prevented. We must do all that we can to build an atmosphere of teamwork and trust in the community by all affected constituencies if we are going to experience any level of meaningful success.

#### **C. Available Services**

The temptation would be to just create an inventory of available services for this report. However, this exercise will only be germane if effort is made to analyze the navigation of those services from the standpoint of the person seeking them.

There are some model examples of partnerships and cooperative efforts in Federal Way, but many services are organized as silos that work independently, and in some cases, without the knowledge of other available services.

Services are difficult to navigate for the person experiencing homelessness because of the lack of any cohesive interface for them. In many cases, people are bounced among various programs with multiple applications and personal interactions with varying success and consistent failure for those that are experiencing need. Inadequate capacity to address the need can also be a part of the problem. This results in mistrust and a sense of hopelessness on the part of many experiencing homelessness.

The overall resources in Federal Way could be better organized in a cohesive and deliberate manner to make it easier for the person experiencing homelessness to navigate potential solutions. There is also a stark inequity in the distribution of services throughout King County. This reality serves to perpetuate the conditions that keep many people from placement into sustainable housing and from experiencing a stable lifestyle.

There is a desire and ability of our local court system to link defendants with needed services that can serve to reduce recidivism and therefore reduce community impacts. The court has the unique ability to compel treatment and other services as part of sentences. There has been some success with community court, but much more could be done that would serve to increase compliance with sentences, reduce jail costs, and assist in community clean up with structured community service and work crew. There could also be a pre-trial release program

that could encourage referrals to treatment and other services if we coordinated existing services with court operations.

Finally, conflicting regulations and policies in the myriad programs offered contribute in many cases to ineffective or inconsistent delivery of services. There needs to be a broader conversation about how government regulations and organizational policies are actually hampering efforts to address homelessness.

### **III. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

#### **A. Overview**

As noted, individuals and the community at large are “experiencing” homelessness. This means that any strategy must address the root causes and the adverse effects of homelessness on individuals, families, and the community at large. Facing an issue of this magnitude, we must act with decisiveness and urgency.

We must view solutions holistically with the understanding that unintended consequences can be avoided if we work together, are honest with ourselves and each other, and do not invest ourselves in an idea or ideology that may feel good but does not do much good.

Focusing too much on the effects on the community will become a resource-intensive, never-ending battle unless we address individual root causes. Focusing too much on individual root causes and ignoring the community effects will create a crisis of public confidence in programs intended to work compassionately with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Focusing too much on the effects to the individuals experiencing homelessness without addressing root causes perpetuates their problems and does not do enough to help them achieve a stable lifestyle and permanent housing. Focusing too much on the root causes without ameliorating the immediate impacts keeps the person in a state of perpetual instability, making it difficult to make progress on root causes.

We must also be realistic that many of the solutions that would work best are beyond our reach as a community due to high costs and a significant lack of local resources. However, we have opportunities to maximize existing resources and seek additional outside resources if we work together. A regional approach may be the best way to leverage resources and increase the impact of services.

#### **B. The Path to Solutions for Individuals**

It is essential when developing solutions for individual root causes and individual impacts that compassion is always in balance with accountability. Too much compassion leads to dependency with little progress for the individual served. Too much accountability, such as zero tolerance policies, leads to individuals being cut off from needed programs for relatively minor rules violations.

Services should be coordinated and strategic and should always strive to see each

person as having unique challenges. We need to adopt a belief that compassion requires us to provide people with the opportunity to seek and achieve permanent solutions. It is not compassionate if we encourage long-term dependency on services and charity to the exclusion of encouraging self-sufficiency, productivity, and a stable lifestyle.

In order to maximize the positive impact on those we intend to serve through the services we offer, there must be a community-coordinated response with an ongoing ethic of compassion by those delivering services coupled with an expectation of progress and accountability by the person receiving those services. However, we cannot hold people accountable for progress if we do not provide a clear path for them to follow with specific achievable benchmarks that can measure their progress.

The challenge is to provide a coordinated continuum of solutions that align with the spectrum of root causes with the most difficult to address on one end and the easiest to address on the other end. The continuum of solutions should be organized in a way that recognizes where the suggested solution fits in a continuum of needs. The continuum of needs can be broken down into broad categories such as “in crisis”, “vulnerable”, “stable”, “safe”, and “thriving”. Applicable services can then be organized within those categories in a manner that provides for progress from “in crisis” to “thriving”.

There must be clear paths for the community and the affected individual that allows for an organized, prompt, and proper assessment and referral to needed services. This means that we must be willing to organize and augment existing services and aggressively seek additional resources to fill identified voids. This is especially true for mental health and addiction intervention and treatment which are sorely lacking proper financial support and availability in our community. The same can be said for many other needed resources, such as shelters and affordable housing.

We must see solutions as part of an ongoing cycle and not as a temporary Band-Aid that masks the underlying cause(s). The individuals experiencing homelessness can then be met where they are<sup>1</sup> in the spectrum and can begin a path of solutions that will lead them on a continuum of progress to sustainable housing and stable lifestyles.

### **C. The Path to Solutions for the Community**

When addressing community impacts and problems, we must do so holistically. We must find ways to work together to tackle the issues we confront in a unified, constructive, and systemic manner.

Some policies penalize property owners for “allowing” homeless encampments. Other policies increase scrutiny of and exact consequences from service providers that are perceived to be an attraction to people who create problems for the community. These policies may perpetuate the “them and us” environment that makes any meaningful progress impossible.

With that said, service providers should be able to justify the utility of their program by striving to make it a part of the coordinated continuum of solutions that leads to positive

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<sup>1</sup> The who, what, where, when, and why of each individual’s circumstances.

outcomes for the individuals they serve. The City must ensure that service providers it funds be able to show an objective measure of their success. In addition, property owners and businesses should strive to be part of the solution wherever they can.

Ideally, those experiencing community impacts should see the benefit of successful programs that benefit the very people that are perceived as causing problems. Just as true, those offering services should see the benefit of reducing community impacts as a justification for increased public confidence in, and the continued existence of, the offered programs.

Defending our respective “sides” of the arguments builds barriers that make solutions impossible. Communication, respect, and understanding will break down barriers and will allow us to reach for solutions that embrace the compassion and the accountability we need.

In sum, we must maximize resources through partnerships and strategic alliances that address individual and community impacts as a team and not as adversaries.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Homelessness Task Force makes the following recommendations:

##### **A. Addressing Impacts for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness**

###### **1. Recommendation 1 – Expand Shelters as Gateways for Progress**

Encourage the expansion of Federal Way’s shelter capacity to make it available on a year round basis and then make the shelter system an integral part of a continuum of care model. Communities with year round shelters experience twice the rate of success as Federal Way. Shelters should be linked directly to all other services and programs offered in the community. *See Appendix B for more details on shelters.*

###### **2. Recommendation 2 – Create a Community Coordinated Response**

Create an ongoing Federal Way collaborative group, staffed if and when funds are available by a new paid staff member in the Community Development Department, Community Services Division, and charged with coordinating and maximizing services and positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness using the continuum of care and progress model. This group would:

- a. Create the mechanism for providing the continuum of care and paths to success for people experiencing homelessness in our community;
- b. Research the pros and cons of having a facility similar to Pierce County and other communities that provide for immediate care and referrals for ongoing care;
- c. Based on the work of the Homeless Taskforce, create a strategic plan to coordinate housing, health, behavioral health, reentry and emergency services;
- d. Create a public campaign that educates and offers opportunities for community members to meaningfully engage in being a part of the solution;

- e. Analyze how some rules and regulations may exacerbate homelessness and make recommendations for remedying those defects;
- f. Cooperate on grant-writing and other financial initiatives;
- g. Evaluate its own success rate in reducing homelessness in Federal Way on a bi-annual basis and re-adjust its efforts as appropriate.

The group could include, but not be limited to, healthcare providers, substance abuse counselors, mental health professionals, King County Public Library System, South King Fire & Rescue, Federal Way Public Schools, Highline College, Green River College, Bates Voc-Tech, Renton Voc-Tech, apprentice programs, trade unions, employer groups, police, courts, City community services personnel, City Human Services Commission, landlords, human services agencies, businesses, outreach providers, low-income housing developers, people who have themselves experienced homelessness currently or in the past, members of the Homelessness Task Force, and other key groups and individuals.

**3. Recommendation 3 – Develop a Community Coordinated Outreach Program**

As an extension of Recommendation 2, develop a citywide targeted outreach plan to ensure that people are engaged with and connected to coordinated services and housing opportunities in a consistent and well-documented manner. Outreach teams would be especially useful when encampments are dismantled. Language used should model caring and respect. The use of peer mentors would be one way to establish the type of outreach that can increase the chance of positive outcomes (*See Recommendation 8*).

**4. Recommendation 4 – Create or Expand Online Resource.**

There should be an easily accessible online resource listing local/regional services available to those in need, including those who are currently experiencing homelessness or are on the brink of becoming homeless. The resource must be updated regularly and should include, but not be limited to, shelters, emergency housing, rental/mortgage/utility assistance, and general human services. The City could either create such a resource itself, cooperate with the county and other nearby municipalities, or work in collaboration with 211.

**5. Recommendation 5 – Increase the Availability of Affordable Housing and the Effectiveness of the Coordinated Entry System**

Look for ways to increase affordable housing in Federal Way and improve collaboration with the King County Coordinated Entry system to increase housing placements. *See Appendix B* for more details on affordable housing.

**6. Recommendation 6 – Increase the Equitable Delivery of Services**

Develop a strategy in conjunction with the community coordinated response team to address inequitable delivery of services and housing solutions in Federal Way. This includes the full spectrum of services including, but not limited to, mental health treatment, addiction treatment, shelters, and other programs that can be



utilized by people experiencing homelessness in Federal Way to help them achieve sustainable housing and a stable lifestyle.

**7. Recommendation 7 -- Partner with local agencies to install public phones**

Though many individuals in need and/or experiencing homelessness have cell phones, they are usually pre-paid with available minutes that run out quickly. Telephone access is a necessity for scheduling appointments for social services, medical appointments, check-ins with probation offices, and other inquiries regarding legal services, just to name a few. Without telephone access, there is a higher chance of missed opportunities to access available services. Therefore, it would help to install free phones at transit centers, libraries, and other public places for those in need and/or experiencing homelessness to access. To avoid misuse of phones, they could dial directly to 211, be outgoing only, or limit area codes.

**8. Recommendation 8 -- Hire and Train Peer Navigators**

Many people experiencing homelessness have experienced some type of trauma. These individuals are less likely to accept help and seek out assistance from individuals to whom they do not relate or whom they do not trust. The best way to understand something is to hear it explained by someone who has had similar experiences and has been in “your shoes.” Peer navigators are individuals with “lived experience.” They have overcome addiction, found stable housing, and/or successfully sought treatment for mental health disorder. Peer navigators have the ability to connect to the homeless community genuinely and are more likely to build trust more quickly. They would provide referrals to resources and assist with benefit acquisition. They could work either for a partnering organization or for the City of Federal Way Community Development Department, Community Services Division.

**B. Addressing Impacts on the Community**

**1. Recommendation 1 – Allow a Safe Parking Program**

All Home findings for King County in 2018 show that the largest portion of the unsheltered homeless community is living in vehicles (28%), which is a 46% increase over 2017.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it would make sense to allow churches to offer the opportunity for individuals temporarily residing in their vehicles to use parking lots after hours for overnight safe parking with limitations and requirements based upon the size of the parking lot, its location, duration and frequency of offered use, and the availability of security, sanitary facilities, and garbage control. Consider necessary changes to Federal Way Revised Code (FWRC) to allow such a program with reasonable restrictions and requirements for a use permit. (Currently, under FWRC 19.130.290, it is illegal to sleep in a vehicle in a residential zone for more than fourteen (14) days in any 180-day period. However, there is some emerging case law suggesting that such

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<sup>2</sup> <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/combined-infographic-PIT-2018-1.pdf>

restrictions, when applied to churches, must be limited to regulations that are necessary to protect public health and safety.)

**2. Recommendation 2 – Create a Group to Coordinate Clean-Up Programs**

Create a group that analyzes the numerous ways to effectuate the beautification and clean-up<sup>3</sup> of our community and then implements best practice recommendations (work crew, structured community service, partnerships, subscription services for security and clean-up, etc.). Best practices should include prevention, mitigation, and remediation. *See Appendix C.*

**3. Recommendation 3 – Continue Vigilant, Effective, Collaborative, and Mission-Focused Law-Enforcement**

City of Federal Way Police must maintain its vigilance in fighting crime and criminal behavior and continue its efforts to prevent future crimes from happening. This takes a tremendous amount of effort from limited law enforcement resources. Currently, the City of Federal Way Police has an entire team of officers who devote all of their time to homeless issues in an effort to supplement patrol and other police and City resources. Networking with other cities' and regional efforts and sharing successes and new ideas is helpful. What works in one place may work in another, and there is no need to reinvent the wheel if not necessary. Police should continue with its collaborative citywide efforts, which include all of the resources represented in the Homelessness Task Force. It will take a multi-faceted approach to produce meaningful and effective solutions to these complex issues. Lastly and most importantly, police must remain committed to its mission to keep the people they serve safe and secure in their daily life.

**4. Recommendation 4 – Better Coordinate with Criminal Justice Programs**

The Municipal Court has had promising results with Community Court. More investment needs to be made to incorporate restorative practices in conjunction with the proposed community coordinated response. Defendants seen in court can then interface with existing community programs that can help reduce recidivism.

**5. Recommendation 5 – Prevent the Re-establishment of Dismantled Encampments.**

Dismantling encampments will only be effective if the City continues to monitor and enforce the closure. There will always be time, effort, and cost to cleaning up, but areas should be monitored to prevent them from getting into an extreme condition. Also, private landowners should be encouraged to pool resources to hire a security firm. Furthermore, the use of underbrush clearing techniques has been one of the most successful tools to prevent reoccupation of land parcels once they have been cleared. This technique is very expensive to the landowner and therefore can be prohibitive to many. A cost analysis/comparison should be considered.

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<sup>3</sup> Clean-up can be broken down into two categories; street litter clean-up and encampment clean-up. Encampment clean-ups include human waste.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The observations and recommendations will be for naught unless we find a way to work collaboratively to address all aspects of homelessness, not just what appeals to a narrow interest or that only provides for a narrow approach. We have much to do and few financial resources with which to do it, but we will succeed if we bring our collective will and determination to work towards the common goals of bettering both our community and the lives of people experiencing homelessness or otherwise in need who eventually can become our good neighbors.

## Appendix A

Available data mirror the expression of the community and reflect an increase in homelessness, both at a regional and local level. The 2018 Count Us In report<sup>4</sup> tracks the number of persons experiencing homelessness on one single night and found 12,112 people experiencing homelessness in King County on January 26, 2018 when the One Night Count occurred. This included 5,792 people in shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing. A total of 6,320 people were unsheltered, or living on the streets, representing a 15% increase over 2017. In Federal Way, the 2018 Count Us In found 176 persons who were unsheltered, up from 106 who were unsheltered in 2017. Information from the January 2018 One Night Count on people who were in shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing is unavailable at this time for Federal Way. Furthermore, in the 2018 Count Us In survey, 4% of respondents reported living in Federal Way at the time of their housing loss, a percentage exceeded only by Seattle and Kent and representing the same percentage as Renton. Federal Way is a city of 96,350 according to 2017 estimates,<sup>5</sup> while the Federal Way Public School District serves an even larger population of about 120,000 people.<sup>6</sup> Tragically, per the King County Medical Examiner's Office's "Presumed Homeless," there have been ten deaths in 2018 of individuals presumed to be homeless in Federal Way.

Additionally, nonprofit organizations are reporting a similar increase in the number of Federal Way families and individuals accessing services, as reported in applications and/or quarterly reports submitted to the City of Federal Way. Most programs accessed by Federal Way residents are not located in the City of Federal Way, meaning residents must go elsewhere to access critical services to address homelessness. Thirteen<sup>7</sup> of these programs report having served 656 households from Federal Way comprised of 1,023 individuals in 2017. The 656 households may be duplicated if a household accessed more than one of the thirteen services. The thirteen programs represent a spectrum of homeless services from outreach and day services to shelter and permanent housing programs. These programs do not include all homeless services programs in the region that Federal Way residents are accessing. Nor do the thirteen programs reflect people experiencing homelessness who resolved their situation on their own.

Furthermore, Mary's Place, the organization that runs the family call-in line for accessing shelter, reported a total of 54 families (i.e., with children) calling in from Federal Way for emergency shelter in quarters one and two in 2018. Of these 54 families from Federal Way, 19 were able to access shelter, meaning that 35 Federal Way families who met the criteria of either

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<sup>4</sup> All Home King County, 2018 Count Us In Report, <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>5</sup> State Office of Financial Management. See <https://www.cityoffederalway.com/page/demographics>

<sup>6</sup> Federal Way Public Schools. See <https://www.fwps.org/Page/2612>

<sup>7</sup> The thirteen programs referenced are: Catholic Community Services, Federal Way Day Center; Catholic Community Services, Reach Out; DAWN, Housing; Friends of Youth; Transitional Living Program; FUSION, FUSION Transitional Housing; Hopelink, Housing; Hospitality House, Shelter; Kent Youth & Family Services, Watson Manor; Multi-Service Center, Shelter and Transitional Housing; Nexus Youth and Families, Street Outreach; Mary's Place, A Place to Call Home Mary's Place; REACH, Center of Hope; and Sound, PATH.

being unsheltered or fleeing domestic violence were not able to access shelter. Of the 19 who did get shelter, two families accessed shelter at other agencies, and 17 accessed it with Mary's Place. For these 17 families, additional information is available, as follows. Two families were sheltered in White Center, three families in Belltown, six families in Denny Regrade, one family in North Seattle, and five families in Shoreline.

South King County as a region represents the highest call volume for families, even greater than Seattle, with 151 unique families calling in from South King County<sup>8</sup> cities in quarter two of 2018, compared to 132 families from Seattle.

In the 2016-2017 school year, 483 students in the Federal Way Public Schools experienced homelessness over the course of the year<sup>9</sup>. A total of 74 of the youth were in shelters, 333 were "doubled up" (i.e., staying with family or friends), 15 were unsheltered, and 61 were staying in motels/hotels. This represents a 31% increase over 2015-2016, when there were 368 students who experienced homelessness. The students in families who accessed shelters faced long bus rides and transportation since family shelters are not located in Federal Way. Families access shelters throughout King County, including shelters in Seattle and in north and east King County.

The data represent Federal Way residents who have lost housing but do not tell the stories of each person who might be a single adult, a parent, or a child who does not have safe housing. The data do not reflect the complexity of how people become homeless or the multi-pronged and tailored strategies needed for people to attain and maintain housing in the future. Many people generalize regarding the predominant causes of homelessness, resulting in a perception that a one-size-fits-all approach will provide meaningful solutions.

The shortage of affordable housing is a significant issue, but the focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing without a concerted effort to address the root causes of homelessness for the affected individuals will only temporarily mask the problem. The goal of stable and sustainable housing can only be met by the progress of individuals on a continuum of services that helps them develop the habits and lifestyles needed for success. In other words, time should be devoted to reviewing the elements of success so that we have a better understanding how to address homelessness in constructive and sustainable ways.

Elements of success may include:

- Addiction free or addiction in remission
- Stable mental health
- Good physical health and healthcare access
- Stable and adequate income
- Financial literacy
- Good tenant habits

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<sup>8</sup> South King County references the Southwest County as defined by the Count Us In report and includes Algona, Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Milton, Normandy Park, Pacific, Renton, SeaTac, Tukwila, and Vashon, although not all of these cities had families calling in to Mary's Place.

<sup>9</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), <http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/Data.aspx>

- Marketable skill
- Affordable housing
- Stable relationships/support systems

Services appropriately focus primarily on individual causes. Solutions must also address societal/community and institutional causes.

**Individual Causes of Homelessness**

- Substance abuse and addiction
- Mental health issues
- Jail/Prison/Incarceration
- Criminal record
- Domestic violence (defendant and victim)
- No income/Unemployment
- Lack of marketable skills/Job training
- Eviction/Prior issues with tenancy
- Divorce/Separation/Breakup
- Insufficient income (working poor)
- Poor physical health/Disability

**Societal/Community Causes of Homelessness**

- Inadequate short-term and long-term shelter services
- Inadequate supply of affordable housing
- Inadequate supply of treatment services
- Inadequate supply of living wage jobs, especially for convicted individuals
- Inadequate supply of tenant training
- Inadequate supply of financial literacy training
- Inadequate coordination with existing resources for job training
- Inconsistent availability of affordable health care
- Disproportionate impacts for members of marginalized groups

**Institutional Causes of Homelessness**

- Inadequate community coordinated response
- Inequitable distribution of services and resources
- Inequitable access to services and resources
- Fragmentation of services and resources
- Regulations and rules that cause eviction or ineligibility for minor violations
- Status changes that create ineligibility for existing services (e.g. reaching the age of 18, incarceration, etc.)

## Appendix B

### Recommended strategies related to shelters

1. Begin to identify partners, as well as properties and resources that may be available for year-round shelter, with the goal to have options for single adults, families, and youth. These options could include an exploration with private property owners, as well as an exploration of re-zoning to allow shelters to be sited in private properties or currently vacant City-owned properties. Begin to identify funding streams to develop and operate sustainable shelter programs in the Federal Way community. For example, some of this work was begun with the 2017 Homeless Mothers and Children Initiative (HMCI) that Mayor Ferrell set up specifically to find a place for a family shelter.
2. Explore ongoing facility-based crisis services that are in line with national best practices, including:
  - 24/7 service model allowing partners, pets, and possessions
  - Low-barrier access with a Housing First approach whenever possible
  - Housing Navigation services
  - Tailored services for those populations with unique needs, including single adults, veterans, youth/young adults, families with children, and those fleeing domestic violence
3. Recognizing that shelter is not the solution for every individual or family, identify and seek to invest in additional crisis response interventions to connect other unsheltered community members to housing-focused services.

### Recommended strategies related to affordable housing:

1. Seek to increase the affordable housing stock in Federal Way for people with incomes below 30% of area mean income (AMI) consistent with Growth Management Act requirements. Federal Way has more than met requirements for affordable housing for all income groups except below 30% of AMI, an income group for which *no* nearby jurisdiction is meeting requirements. Obviously, this group is more of a challenge.
2. Consider ways to reduce development barriers, such as zoning restrictions, parking requirements, and impact fees.
3. Complete a comprehensive inventory of the housing stock in Federal Way, assess the need for additional affordable housing, and identify next steps.
4. Consider incentives for developers to encourage the inclusion of affordable units in new development projects.
5. Sign onto the Inter-local Agreement of the South King Housing and Homelessness Partnership.
6. Create and/or seek additional funding streams for ongoing subsidies and housing voucher programs.

## Appendix C

### Work Crew and Community Service

The City of Federal Way Municipal Court currently contracts with the Washington State Department of Corrections for Work Crew. This program serves as an alternative to jail. The defendant is charged \$15 per day, but the city advances the money out of the police jail budget with the defendant paying the cost back over time. Court probation staff medically screens defendants to ensure they are fit to work. The Court cannot use work crew in lieu of fines because it is a form of detention. No work is actually done within the City of Federal Way. People sentenced to work crew in Federal Way actually perform their work in Seattle.

#### Recommendations:

1. Option 1 would be to expand the contract with DOC at an approximate cost of \$80,000 annually. This would be the same program we currently use, for sentencing in lieu of or in addition to jail time. The difference would be that the work would be done here in the City of Federal Way. There are ways to coordinate with local property owners and businesses to defray the cost of DOC work crew. Many property owners face enormous costs for clean-up. Work crew could be used on a subscription basis to periodically police subscriber's property in exchange for a set monthly or annual fee.
2. Option 2 would be for the City to run a work crew program itself. A detailed budget has not yet been formulated for this option. However, it would likely entail equal or greater costs than Option 1 since it would need a paid supervisor and equipment including vans, port-a-potty, tools, accessories (gloves, bags, grabbers), and reflective vests. The City would also assume liability for any issues that arise from the work.

### Other Options and Recommendations

1. Explore a trial run of a program like the one in Albuquerque, New Mexico by partnering with a local non-profit. This program gives panhandlers a chance at a change in life by providing them with payment for doing cleanup work around the city. A free meal is also provided. When the job is completed, the person is taken to a facility to pick up his or her check and is put in touch with services. A trial run would cost approximately \$50,000.
2. The Federal Way Municipal Court has wanted to create a community service program for a number of years but has not had the resources to do so. The program could be used as a jail alternative as well as a method to help defendants pay off fines. There are models of this program that could utilize non-profits to do the work without a substantial investment of city resources.
3. In conjunction with either of the above two programs, consider posting signs in known panhandling locations, as is done in Philadelphia, with slogans urging people to donate to a local non-profit providing services rather than give to panhandlers. Signs can contain a phone number to call or a website to access, allowing one to automatically make a donation.



4. Research better garbage can options (e.g. Big Belly Solar, more solid styles that close so people cannot dumpster dive)
5. Revisit having an “Adopt-a-Stop” or “Adopt-a-Highway” program in Federal Way, under which a local business or group would take responsibility for cleanup at a particular location, with signs posted advertising the business’s or group’s contribution.
6. Continue research on what other cities are doing successfully (e.g. requiring clients at shelters to give back by picking up litter)
7. Educate nonprofits and individuals that continue to give unneeded items to people experiencing homelessness that are then left for others to pick up. Recommend that they instead donate supplies to Federal Way Day Center, Seattle Union Gospel Mission, Reach Out, or Multi-Service Center (MSC).
8. Encourage businesses *not* to have donation bins on their property. While some of the newer versions of containers do make access harder, unfortunately, these bins are a great place to leave trash or from which to remove donations.
9. Start some fun and creative marketing about keeping our city clean with clever, catchy signs urging people not to litter.